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HOW THE GREAT WAR AROSE.

"During the past few weeks the peoples of My whole Empire at Home and Overseas have moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilisation and the peace of mankind.

"The calamitous conflict is not of My seeking. My voice has been cast throughout on the side of peace. My Ministers earnestly strove to allay the causes of strife and to appease differences with which My Empire was not concerned. Had I stood aside when in defiance of pledges to which My Kingdom was a party the soil of Belgium was violated and her cities laid desolate, when the very life of the French nation was threatened with extinction, I should have sacrificed My honour and given to destruction the liberties of My Empire and of mankind. I rejoice that every part of the Empire is with Me in this decision.

"Paramount regard for treaty faith and the pledged word of rulers and peoples is the common heritage of Great Britain and of the Empire."

(Extract from His Majesty the King's Message to the Empire, September 9th, 1914.)

1914

Parliamentary Recruiting Committee,
12, Downing Street, London, S.W.

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NOTE.

'The references to the White Paper are to White Paper [Cd. 7467]. Thus " White Paper No. 39 " means document numbered 39 in that publication. The 2nd White Paper is [Cd. 7445]. The 3rd White Paper is [Cd. 7596]. The three White Papers have now been published by the Government in a penny Bluebook.

HOW THE GREAT WAR AROSE.

SERBIA'S POSITION.

After the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand by *Austrian* subjects in *Austrian* territory on June 28, 1914, Austria, on July 23, demanded that Serbia should suppress all publications and societies in Serbia which tried to promote the so-called "Greater Serbia" movement, whose ideal it is that Serbia should expand so as to include the provinces of the Austrian Empire inhabited by men of Serbian race. Austria further insisted that Serbia should—

Eliminate all teaching of this kind from Serbian schools ;
Stop illicit traffic of arms from Serbia into the Serbian provinces of Austria ;

Take judicial proceedings against all concerned in the alleged plot which resulted in the murder of the Archduke.

Austria also asked that Austrian Officers should assist "in the suppression" of this "Greater Serbia" movement and should take part in the judicial proceedings with regard to the plot against the Archduke.

Serbia was given forty-eight hours until 6 p.m. on July 25 to accept. Serbia agreed to everything except the interference of Austrian Officers on Serbian territory and offered to submit the question whether this demand was necessary and reasonable to "the International Tribunal of The Hague or to the Great Powers which took part in the drawing up of the declaration made by the Serbian Government on the 31 March, 1909" (*White Paper*, No. 39).

The Austrians made the above demands in spite of the fact that before the murder took place the Serbians had actually tried to expel from their territory one of the assassins, believing him to be a dangerous person, and the Austrians had

protected him as an Austrian subject and said he was harmless. (Sir E. Grey to British Ambassador at Belgrade, July 25, 1914—*White Paper*, No. 30.)

RUSSIA'S POSITION.

The Russians are a Slav people like the Serbians. Serbian independence was one of the results of the great war which Russia waged against Turkey in 1877. It was known to the Austrians and to every Foreign Secretary in Europe that if the Czar's Government allowed Serbia to be crushed by Austria they would be in danger of a revolution in Russia. Moreover, if they allowed a small State of their own race thus to be crushed by a huge neighbouring Power, their prestige amongst European nations would suffer greatly. Austria was well aware of these facts, and had been warned specifically during the Balkan crisis. (British Ambassador at Petrograd to Sir E. Grey, August 1, 1914—*White Paper*, No. 139.)

Russia was bound to stand by Serbia if the latter were attacked by Austria; but she was willing to accept either a Conference (between England, Germany, France and Italy) to find a method of satisfying Austria without destroying Serbian independence, or the mediation of Italy and Britain as between herself and Austria. (British Ambassador at Petrograd to Sir E. Grey, July 27, 1914, *White Paper*, No. 55, and August 1, 1914—*White Paper*, No. 139.)

And on July 30 Russia promised to stop all military preparations if Austria would withdraw demands "which violate principle of sovereignty of Servia." (*White Paper*, No. 97.)

AUSTRIA'S ACTION.

Austria first showed signs of being willing to negotiate on a reasonable basis on July 30, as is seen in the statement made to Sir E. Grey by Sir M. de Bunsen, the British Ambassador at Vienna (*Third White Paper*). Prior to that, backed by Germany, she had practically refused all the above proposals; rejected the moderate compromise proposed by Serbia; mobilised her troops and attacked Serbia without giving any time for intervention.

GERMANY'S ACTION.

Germany made no serious efforts to keep the peace. Indeed at the critical moment she took action which precipitated the Great War. For when conversations between Petrograd and Vienna were beginning on July 30 they were cut short by the transfer of the dispute to the more dangerous

ground of a direct conflict between Germany and Russia. Sir M. de Bunsen says:—

“Germany intervened on the 31st July by means of her double ultimatums to St. Petersburg (Petrograd) and Paris. The ultimatums were of a kind to which only one answer is possible, and Germany declared war on Russia on the 1st August, and on France on the 3rd August. A few days delay might in all probability have saved Europe from one of the greatest calamities in history.”—(*Third White Paper.*)

She rejected all suggestions. It is clear now that Austria, supported by Germany, was determined on war. The Serbian episode was an excuse. Germany's alliance with Austria was “defensive.” She was bound to join with Austria only in case of the latter being *attacked* by Russia. Austria claimed that because Russia would not stand idle while Serbia was crushed, therefore Russia was the aggressor. Germany was a party to the Austrian attack on Serbia.

The British Ambassador to Austria at Vienna says:—

“I have private information that the German Ambassador (at Vienna) knew the text of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia *before it was despatched and telegraphed it to the German Emperor*. I know from the German Ambassador himself that he endorses every line of it.”—(British Ambassador at Vienna to Sir E. Grey, July 30, 1914.—*White Paper No. 95.*)

Germany, therefore, chose this moment to send a challenge to Russia knowing that Russia must fight unless she were willing to be humiliated and disgraced in the eyes not only of men of the Slav race in the Balkans, but in the eyes of the whole world.

The French Foreign Minister—telegraphing on July 31 to the French Ambassador in London as to Germany's aggressive steps on the Franco-German frontier—said:—

“All my information goes to show that the German preparations began on Saturday (July 25), the very day on which the Austrian note (to Serbia) was handed in.”—(*White Paper, No. 105—Enclosure 3, p. 58.*)

What has actually happened in the war goes to show that this must have been the case.

PEACE THWARTED “BY” GERMANY.

After Austria had issued the ultimatum to Serbia, Great Britain proposed that the four non-interested Powers—Great Britain, Germany, Italy and France—should intervene to find a method of satisfying Austria without destroying

Serbian independence. As the whole question was how to make sure that Serbia faithfully performed what she had promised to do, there would have been very little difficulty in settling the matter. Russia agreed to the proposal and France and Italy agreed to join the Conference. But *Germany refused!* A single word from Germany to Austria that she would not be supported in insisting on demands which were destructive of Serbian independence would have prevented the war. *That word was not spoken.*

BRITAIN'S LAST ATTEMPT.

On July 31, Great Britain undertook that if Germany and Austria would make any proposal for settling Austria's difference with Serbia which did not destroy the independence of Serbia, and if France and Russia refused that proposal, then Britain would stand aside. Germany refused to consider this offer, but instead sent an ultimatum to France and to Russia.

GERMANY'S SELECTED MOMENT.

The past history of Germany shows that she has always made her wars at her own "selected moment," when she thought her victim was isolated or unprepared. As General von Bernhardi says in his recent work, "Germany and the Next Great War":—"English attempts at a *rapprochement* must not blind us as to the real situation. We may at most use them to delay the necessary and inevitable war until we may fairly imagine we have some prospect of success." The known facts of the present case and the messages of our Ambassadors suggest that Germany chose this particular time:—

- (1) Calculating that Russia if she did not fight would be humiliated, whilst Austria—Germany's ally—would be strengthened by the conquest of Serbia; and
- (2) Believing that if Russia chose to fight, even if she fought with France and Britain as her allies, still it was a favourable moment.

GERMANY WAS READY.

The deepening of the Kiel Canal to permit German battleships to pass from the Baltic to the North Sea was just completed. Germany had got at her disposal the larger part of a huge war tax of £50,000,000, and had added enormously to her land forces. The murder of the Archduke created a pretext which roused enthusiasm for war in Austria.

GERMANY BELIEVED THAT HER POSSIBLE OPPONENTS WERE NOT READY.

RUSSIA.—Russia was passing through serious industrial troubles which it was thought might end in revolution.

FRANCE.—France was passing through a period of political chaos, no Government being able to hold together for more than a few weeks. And on July 13 the French had appointed a Committee to inquire and report immediately on alleged deficiencies in various defensive preparations.

BELGIUM.—Belgium was beginning a re-organisation of her Army which would have gradually increased it to almost double its present strength.

BRITAIN.—Germany thought the political position in Britain made it impossible for her to show a united front in foreign affairs, and that therefore she would be unable to fight.

The British Ambassador in Berlin telegraphed : " Austrian colleague said to me to-day that a general war was most unlikely as Russia neither wanted nor was in a position to make war. I think that this opinion is shared by many people."—(Berlin, July 28, 1914.—*White Paper*, No. 71.)

The British Ambassador in Vienna telegraphed :—" According to confident belief of German Ambassador Russia will keep quiet during chastisement of Serbia. . . . France, too, was not at all in a condition for facing war."—(Vienna, July 26, 1914.—*White Paper*, No. 32.) He also telegraphed on August 1 : " I agree with his Excellency (the Russian Ambassador) that the German Ambassador at Vienna desired war from the first."—(Vienna, August 1.—*White Paper*, No. 141.)

The Germans seem to have assumed that Britain would be glad incidentally to seize the chance of making money through neutrality and would repudiate her treaty obligations to Belgium and her friendship for France, and be content to see Germany ruthlessly crushing the smaller Powers of Europe.

Our Foreign Secretary telegraphed to our Ambassador at Petrograd :—" I have been told by the Russian Ambassador that in German and Austrian circles impression prevails that in any event we would stand aside. This impression ought, as I have pointed out, to be dispelled by the orders we have given to the First Fleet . . . not to disperse for manœuvre leave."—(London, July 27, 1914.—*White Paper*, No. 47.)

Our Ambassadors at Petrograd (July 24, 1914.—*White Paper*, No. 6.), Rome (July 29, 1914.—*White Paper*, No. 80) and Paris (July 30, 1914.—*White Paper*, No. 99) each stated

that the Foreign Offices of Russia, Italy and France respectively thought that Germany was counting on our neutrality, while the German Foreign Minister, after war was actually declared, seemed totally unable to understand how we could go to war for what he called "a Scrap of Paper"—(2nd *White Paper*, p. 3). The "Scrap of Paper" happened to be a treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium, and signed by both Great Britain and Germany!

WHAT THE ATTACK ON SERBIA REALLY MEANT.

We must remember that Austria, backed by Germany, was seeking an excuse to make war on Serbia. Our Ambassador at Constantinople discovered the true object in view when he telegraphed on July 29:—

"I understand that the designs of Austria may extend considerably beyond the Sanjak and a punitive occupation of Serbian territory. I gathered this from a remark let fall by the Austrian Ambassador here who spoke of the deplorable economic situation of Salonica under Greek administration and of the assistance on which the Austrian Army could count from the Mussulman population discontented with Serbian rule."—(Constantinople, July 29, 1914;—*White Paper*, No. 82.)

So Austria contemplated no less than the break-up of the whole Balkan settlement to which she and Germany had been parties so recently as 1913. She was to take advantage of the weakened condition of the Balkan peoples (as a result of the Wars of 1912-13) to wage a war of conquest right down to the Ægean Sea.

HOW RUSSIA CAME IN.

We have seen how Russia was inevitably brought in to save Serbia.

HOW GERMANY CAME IN.

Germany chose to regard the beginning of mobilisation of Russia's Army in the south after the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia as an "attack" upon Austria and, therefore, after presenting ultimatums on July 31, declared war on both Russia and France. Germany at once proceeded to send troops into Luxemburg and Belgium, thus violating treaties to which she was a party.

HOW FRANCE CAME IN.

France, by her alliance with Russia, was bound to stand by Russia if she was attacked by Germany and Austria. On

July 31 the German Ambassador at Paris informed the French Government that Russia had ordered a complete mobilisation, and that Germany had given Russia twelve hours in which to order demobilisation and asking France to define her attitude. France was given no time, and war came when German troops at once crossed the French frontier. Germany, by her attitude towards France, plainly admitted that she was the aggressor. She made no pretence of any cause of quarrel with France, but attacked her because of France's defensive alliance with Russia.

HOW ITALY REMAINED NEUTRAL.

Italy was bound by her alliance with Germany and Austria to come to their assistance if they were attacked by France and Russia. Italy remained neutral because she held that Germany and Austria were the aggressors, not Russia and France. (Italian Ambassador at Paris to French Government.—*White Paper*, No. 152.)

HOW BRITAIN CAME IN.

Britain was drawn in to save Belgium. We were bound by a Treaty (1839) to which Germany and France were also parties, guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium.

France was faithful to her Treaty. She left her Belgian frontier unfortified; she gave an undertaking to Britain that she would respect Belgian neutrality.

Germany by refusing any such promise and invading Belgium brought upon herself a declaration of war from Great Britain. The German Chancellor himself said in the Reichstag on the day Belgian soil was violated by German invasion :—

“ We are now in a state of necessity, and *necessity knows no law*. . . . We were compelled to override the just protest of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. The wrong, I speak openly, we are committing we will endeavour to make good as soon as our military goal has been reached.”—
(*Reichstag*, August 4, 1914.)

Germany proposed not only to ride ruthlessly over Belgium, but to take advantage of the fact that France had been faithful to her Treaties, and to get round the French line of defences and make straight for Paris. How could Britain be a party to such treachery?

GERMANY'S “ INFAMOUS PROPOSAL.”

Germany, having finally decided on a war in conjunction with Austria (expecting perhaps the additional help of Italy) against Russia and France, made what our Ambassador

at Berlin called a "strong bid for British neutrality" (July 29).

Germany offered to agree in the event of war with France not to take any French territory in Europe, and that the "integrity" of Belgium would be restored after the war if Belgium did not resist the passage of German troops marching to Paris through her territory.

Britain was to stand by and

See Belgium invaded, and, if she resisted, annexed by Germany.

See all the French Colonies taken by Germany.

See German naval bases set up all over the world.

Acquiesce in France, our neighbour and friend, being crushed under the iron heel of Germany, and, as Bismarck threatened, bled white by a war indemnity when all was over.

Britain was to have her honour dragged in the mud and her name made accursed in every country in the world except Germany, and the subject of contempt in Germany itself, in order to buy peace and the profits to be gained from "neutrality."

That is the "infamous bargain" which Britain spurned, and to which the Prime Minister referred on August 6 in the House of Commons, in the following words:—

"What would have been the position of Great Britain to-day . . . if we had assented to this infamous proposal? Yes, and what are we to get in return for the betrayal of our friends and the dishonour of our obligations? What are we to get in return? A promise—nothing more; a promise as to what Germany would do in certain eventualities; a promise, be it observed—I am sorry to have to say it, but it must be put upon record—given by a Power which was at that very moment announcing its intention to violate its own treaty and inviting us to do the same. I can only say, if we had dallied or temporised, we, as a Government, should have covered ourselves with dishonour, and we should have betrayed the interests of this country, of which we are trustees."—(*House of Commons, August 6, 1914.*)

IF BRITAIN HAD REFUSED TO FIGHT.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith), speaking at the Guildhall on September 4, 1914, said:—

"But let me ask you, and through you the world outside, what would have been our condition as a nation to-day if, through timidity or through a perverted calculation of self-interest, or through a paralysis of the sense of honour and duty, we had been base enough to be false to our word and faithless to our friends?"

"Our eyes would have been turned at this moment with those of the whole civilised world to Belgium—a small State which has lived for more than 70 years under a several and collective guarantee, to which we in common with Prussia and Austria, were parties—and we should have seen, at the instance and by the action of two of these guaranteeing Powers, her neutrality violated, her independence strangled, her territory made use of as affording the easiest and most convenient road to a war of unprovoked aggression against France.

"We, the British people, should have at this moment been standing by with folded arms and with such countenance as we could command, while this small and unprotected State (Belgium), in defence of her vital liberties, made a heroic stand against overweening and overwhelming force.

"We should have been watching as detached spectators the siege of Liège, the steady and manful resistance of a small Army, the occupation of Brussels with its splendid traditions and memories, the gradual forcing back of the patriotic defenders of their native land to the ramparts of Antwerp, countless outrages suffered by them, and buccaneering levies exacted from, the unoffending civil population, and finally the greatest crime committed against civilisation and culture since the Thirty Years' War—the sack of Louvain, with its buildings, its pictures, its unique library, its unrivalled associations, a shameless holocaust of irreparable treasures lit up by blind barbarian vengeance. . . .

"For my part I say that sooner than be a silent witness—which means in effect a willing accomplice—of this tragic triumph of force over law and of brutality over freedom, I would see this country of ours blotted out of the pages of history."
—(*Guildhall, September 4, 1914.*)

Further, we need not imagine that the peace we should have gained would have been a lasting one. If we had dishonoured our name in the manner Mr. Asquith has described, we should have been left without a friend in the world. Who can doubt that we should have been Germany's next victim if she had succeeded in crushing Belgium and France and warding off the blows of Russia?

The fate which has fallen upon Belgium would have been our fate in a few years' time with this difference, that we should have had no powerful friends to give back as far as humanly possible what we had lost, as Russia, France and Britain are determined to do for Belgium.

As Mr. Bonar Law has said:—"We are fighting for our national existence, for everything which nations have always held most dear."

WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING AGAINST ?

We have no quarrel with Austria except that her vanity has led all Europe into this awful disaster—unless indeed Austria is but an instrument used by Germany for her own ambitions.

We are fighting to destroy for ever the Robber Power of Germany. With the German people as pioneers of music, science and industry we have no quarrel. But as Mr. Bonar Law said at the Guildhall, London (on September 4) :—
“ The German nation has allowed itself to be organised as a military machine which recognises no law except the law of force, which knows no right except the right of the strongest. It is against that we are fighting to-day.”

GERMAN POLICY OF BLOOD AND IRON.

Here, in brief, is the story of Germany's rise to a world Power :—

- 1864. Prussia made war upon Denmark without the slightest provocation and robbed her of her fairest provinces, Schleswig and Holstein, through which she has since built the Kiel Canal for naval purposes to join the Baltic and the North Sea.
- 1866. Prussia turned upon Austria, who had been her ally against Denmark, and smote her to the ground for no reason except the desire to show that Prussia was the strongest German-speaking power.
- 1870. United Germany forced a war on France because she knew that she was ready and France was not. She carried fire, sword and rapine through France, extracted a great war indemnity in money, and robbed her of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.
- 1897. Germany threatened Japan, and made her give up the fruits of her victory over China, while she herself seized a harbour and large territory from China at Kiaochao.
- 1905. Germany, knowing that Russia was too much weakened to protect her ally, threatened and bullied France and compelled the French Government to dismiss M. Delcassé, whose only offence was that he was the Minister responsible for the Anglo-French Convention of 1904.

1908-9. When Austria, tearing up a Treaty to which both she and Germany were parties, annexed Bosnia and Hertzegovina, Germany threatened Russia with war if she came to the rescue of these Balkan States.

1911. Germany threatened war against France because of her peaceful agreement with Britain about Morocco and (in spite of our statement that we would stand by France if attacked by Germany) made France give up territory to her in Africa as compensation for shadowy "rights" in Morocco.

Finally, supporting Austria in her proposal to crush out Serbian nationality, she finds excuses for herself violating the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg. Who can doubt that, if she were allowed to be successful, Denmark and Holland would be the next victims?

Truly, Germany is the great disturber of the peace, the bully of the nations.

HOW THE GERMANS MAKE WAR.

German warfare is as ruthless as German diplomacy. They do not hesitate to crush out nationalities to achieve their political ends. So do they in actual warfare. They adopt the policy that war is a ruthless business and that "Necessity knows no law." The German Emperor, addressing the troops which he sent to take part in the International Expedition in China in 1900, said :—

"When you come into contact with the enemy strike him down. *Quarter is not to be given. Prisoners are not to be made.* Whoever falls into your hands is into your hands delivered. Just as a thousand years ago the Huns, under their King Attila, made for themselves a name which still appears imposing in tradition, so may the name of German become known in China in such a way that never again will a Chinaman dare to look askance at a German. The blessing of the Lord be with you. Give proof of your courage and the Divine blessing will be attached to your colours."

Prince Bismarck's advice to the German troops in 1870 was :—

"Above all you must inflict on the inhabitants of invaded towns the maximum of suffering so that they may become sick of the struggle. . . . You must leave the people through whom you march only their eyes to weep with."

The Germans, acting up to these maxims, have played the part of modern Huns in their ruthless campaign of Terrorism in Belgium.

HOW THE BRITISH EMPIRE MUST FIGHT.

In this war we began by putting a comparatively small number of soldiers into the field. But our allies rapidly called upon every able-bodied man in their countries. For our own safety we must fight on and on until our enemies are entirely crushed. We must take our fair share of the burden. As Mr. Asquith has said :—

"In regard to the Army there is a call for a new, a continuous, and a determined and united effort, for as the War goes on we shall have not merely to maintain our military power at its original level, we must if we are to play a worthy part enlarge its scale, increase its numbers and multiply many times its effectiveness as a fighting instrument."—(*Guildhall, September 4th, 1914.*)

Lord Kitchener's plan is that we must go on sending more men to the front, not only filling up the vacancies in our original forces, but making our armies stronger and stronger as the armies of our enemies and our allies grow weaker with exhaustion, so that we may come out victorious as we have done before. He says :—

"The Empires with whom we are at war have called to the colours almost their entire male population. The principle we on our part shall observe is this, that while their maximum force undergoes a constant diminution, the reinforcements we prepare shall steadily and increasingly flow out until we have an Army in the field which in numbers not less than in quality will not be unworthy of the power and responsibility of the British Empire.

"I cannot at this stage say what will be the limits of the forces required, or what measures may eventually become necessary to supply and maintain them. The scale of the Field Army which we are now calling into being is large and may rise in the course of the next six or seven months to a total of 30 divisions continually maintained in the field.

"But if the war should be protracted, and if its fortunes should be varied or adverse, exertions and sacrifices beyond any which have been demanded will be required from the whole nation and Empire, and where they are required we are sure they will not be denied to the extreme needs of the State by Parliament or the people."—(*House of Lords, August 25th, 1914.*)

Lord Kitchener's call is primarily to every man under 35 years of age who is fit and has no dependents. For these men the path of duty lies clear. They must enlist in the Army or Navy.

They may have many reasons for refusing, but they can have no excuse, unless they are already serving their country in some necessary capacity. Even in that case, their place can in most cases be taken by married men, and in many cases by some of the women whom the war has thrown out of employment in thousands.

For a statement of the conditions under which recruits may volunteer for the New Army, the reader is referred to Parliamentary Recruiting Committee Leaflet, No. 1.



PARLIAMENTARY RECRUITING COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS.

The following publications are now ready and can be supplied in sets on application without charge. Quantities for distribution can also be supplied without charge, it being understood that the person making the request undertakes to see that the literature is carefully and effectively distributed.

All applications to be made to the Publications Sub-Department, 21, Abingdon Street, Westminster, S.W.

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[A leaflet issued by the War Office, explaining the exact terms upon which men are asked to enlist in the New Army.]	
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[The speeches made by Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Redmond in the House of Commons on the Address of Sympathy to Belgium.]	
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